

## Message Text

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42

ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4847

INFO AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 1722

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, AR

SUBJECT: DISINTEGRATION OF PERONISM

REF: BUENOS AIRES 1568

1. SINCE THE CONGRESS ON MAR 6 (SEE REFTTEL), MRS. PERON HAS ENJOYED UNCHALLENGED CONTROL OF THE PERONIST PARTY ORGANIZATION. THIS SHOULD BE SMALL COMFORT TO HER, HOWEVER, FOR THAT ORGANIZATION HAS NOW BEEN REDUCED TO A SMALL MINORITY, PROBABLY LESS THAN ONE-THIRD, OF THE PERONIST MASS EMBRACED BY THE PARTY AT THE TIME OF PERON'S TRIUMPHANT RETURN IN 1973. THE LEFT WING LONG AGO SPLIT AWAY COMPLETELY AND NOW FORMS A SEPARATE PARTY--THE PARTIDO AUTENTICO.

MUCH LARGER AND OF GREATER IMPORTANCE ARE THE ANTI-VERTICALISTAS, PROBABLY MORE THAN HALF OF WHAT USED TO BE THE PERONIST PARTY. THE ANTIVERTICALISTAS, IN TURN, ARE DIVIDED INTO SEVERAL GROUPS AND FACTIONS--SEN LUDER AND A FEW SUPPORTERS, THE WORKING GROUP, THE CALABRO FORCES, OTHER DISSIDENT LABOR GROUPS, THE ROBLEDO-BAEZ FORCES, AND THE PERONIST REAFFIRMATION. OFTEN THESE GROUPS OVERLAP. SOMETIMES THEY SEE EYE-TO-EYE AND COOPERATE; SOMETIMES NOT. ONE THING THEY ALL AGREE ON IS THAT (DESPITE HER NAME) MRS. PERON HAS WRECKED THEIR PARTY AND MUST GO.

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2. THEY ARE CERTAINLY RIGHT ABOUT HER WRECKING THE

PERONIST MOVEMENT. IT IS NOW IN A STATE OF DIS-INTEGRATION. ALL FACTIONS WILL DOUBTLESS CONTINUE TO CALL THEMSELVES AND THINK OF THEMSELVES AS PERONISTS, BUT THE CHANCES OF A RECONCILIATION WHICH WOULD BRING THE VARIOUS FACTIONS TOGETHER AGAIN IN AN INTACT MASS ARE EXTREMELY REMOTE.

3. MOST ANTI-VERTICALISTAS ARE TRYING TO PUT DISTANCE BETWEEN THEMSELVES AND MRS. PERON. AS SUGGESTED IN REFTTEL, THAT WAS ONE REASON MANY OF THEM DECIDED TO BOYCOTT THE PERONIST PARTY CONGRESS. SUBSEQUENTLY, SEVERAL REGIONAL CGT ORGANIZATIONS HAVE ACCUSED MRS. PERON OF HAVING BETRAYED, OR AT LEAST ABANDONED, GEN PERON'S PROGRAMS AND PHILOSOPHY. AND ON THE FLOOR OF THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES LAST WEEK, PERONIST LABOR DEP RICARDO DE LUCA PUBLICLY DISTINGUISHED BETWEEN "ISABELISMO" AND "PERONISMO", SUGGESTING THAT MRS. PERON AND HER MINORITY GROUP OF RIGHT-WING SUPPORTERS ARE NOT REALLY PERONISTS AND THAT THE TWO FORCES REPRESENT IRRECONCILABLE CURRENTS. THE PERONIST MAYOR OF VICENTE LOPEZ, MOREOVER, AT A CEREMONY LAST WEEK HONORING THE MEMORY OF ROSAS (ONLY SLIGHTLY BELOW PERON AND EITA IN THE PANTHEON OF PERONIST HEROS), ALSO HURLED DEFIANCE AT MRS. PERON AND SEEMED TO ENDORSE A COUP BY SAYING: "WE APPEAR BEFORE PUBLIC OPINION AND SAY ENOUGH OF THIS PROCESS WHICH IF NOT CORRECTED WILL OBLIGE OUR ARMED FORCES NOT TO SEIZE THE GOVT BUT RATHER TO TAKE CHARGE OF A VACUUM OF POWER SO AS TO AVOID ANARCHY--ANARCHY WHICH MIGHT EASILY LEAD TO MARXISM."

4. ON LABOR SIDE, TOO, AS SUGGESTED ABOVE, THE PERONISTS ARE NOW IN STATE OF ACUTE DISARRAY. LORENZO MIGUEL AND SOME UNIONS CONTINUE TO SUPPORT MRS. PERON, BUT MOST DO NOT. CLEARLY, MANY PERONIST LABOR LEADERS HAVE ALREADY MADE THEIR PEACE WITH MILITARY. INFIGHTING AMONG LEADERS THEMSELVES IS INCREASING, HOWEVER, AND THERE IS LARGE QUESTION AS TO HOW MUCH CONTROL LEADERS STILL EXERCISE OVER RANK AND FILE. HOW MUCH AGREEMENTS WITH LEADERS MAY BE WORTH, THEREFORE, REMAINS VERY MUCH TO BE SEEN.

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5. ANOTHER INDICATION OF HARD DAYS ON WHICH PERONIST MOVEMENT HAS FALLEN IS SEEN IN ANNOUNCEMENT THAT PRO-PERONIST DAILY MAYORIA WILL CLOSE ON MAR 31. IN ITS ANNOUNCEMENT, MAYORIA (SIGNIFICANTLY) EVEN DENIED THAT IT WAS A PERONIST PAPER. IT HAD BEEN SYMPATHETIC TO MANY OF THE PERONIST PROGRAMS, BUT, IT INSISTED, HAD NEVER BEEN OF OR REPRESENTED THE PERONIST MOVEMENT. WE UNDERSTAND THAT REASON FOR CLOSING IS BASICALLY FINANCIAL. EDITORS DECIDED THAT IF

THEY CULDN'T MAKE ENDS MEET DURING PERONIST HEYDAY,  
THEIR PROSPECTS IN WEEKS AHEAD, WITH PERONISM IN-  
CREASINGLY DISCREDITED AND COUP IMMINENT, WERE SO  
DISMAL AS TO WARRANT SHUT DOWN.

6. IF ONE REASON ARMED FORCES HAVE DELAYED INTERVENTION  
AS LONG AS THEY HAVE WAS TO GIVE PERONISM AN OPPORTUNITY  
TO FALL APART AND THE GOVT TO DISCREDIT ITSELF, THEY  
HAVE HAD THEIR WISH. IT IS TOO EARLY TO PREDICT WHETHER  
DISSINTEGRATION IS PERMANENT. EVEN IF IT IS, UNLESS AND  
UNTIL SOME VIABLE POLITICAL ALTERNATIVE EMERGES (AND  
MOST ARGENTINES DO NOT CONSIDER THE UCR TO BE A REAL  
ALTERNATIVE), PERONISM IS NOT LIKELY SIMPLY TO DIE.  
ONE OR ANOTHER OF ITS SPLIT-AWAY FACTIONS WILL PROBABLY  
BE LARGE ENOUGH TO PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE FUTURE  
POLITICAL SCENE. WHETHER OR NOT PERONISM EVER REGAINS  
THE SORT OF OVERWHELMING POSITION IT ENJOYED IN EARLIER  
DAYS, HOWEVER, REMAINS VERY MUCH TO BE SEEN. FIRST OF  
ALL, PERON IS NO LONGER ALIVE TO BRING IT TOGETHER AGAIN.  
IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS, THE ANSWER TO PERONISM'S FUTURE  
PROBABLY DEPENDS LARGELY UPON THE TONE AND SUCCESS OF  
FUTURE GOVTS. IF THE LATTER CAN COME TO GRIPS WITH THE  
NATION'S ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL ILLS, THEN PERONISM IS  
NOT LIKELY TO RECOVER ITS FORMER STRENGTH AND COHESION.  
IF, ON THE OTHER HAND, FUTURE GOVTS MAKE NO BETTER SHOWING  
THAN THOSE OF THE PAST, AND ESPECIALLY IF THEY SHOULD ALSO  
ADOPT HARD-LINE, REPRESSIVE MEASURES AGAINST THE PERONISTS,  
THE DISPARATE FACTIONS MIGHT THEN AGAIN BEGIN TO COALESCE.  
IN SHORT, SITUATION IS ANALOGOUS TO THAT OF POST-1955  
PERIOD. AS PERON HIMSELF COMMENTED IN 1972, DURABILITY  
OF PERONIST MOVEMENT AND OF HIS OWN MYTH WERE NOT DUE  
SO MUCH TO HOW PERFECT PERONISTS HAD BEEN IN POWER;  
RATHER, THEY WERE DUE TO HOW BAD HAD BEEN ALL GOVTS  
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AFTER THEM.  
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## Message Attributes

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